DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 078 124 VT 018 408

AUTHOR Marland, S. P., Jr.
TITLE Voices From the Real World.
PUB DATE 10 Nov 72
NOTE 14p.; Presented at the Annual Conference of the Council of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences (Washington, D. C., November 10, 1972)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Career Choice; *Career Education; Career Planning; Decision Making Skills; *Educational Change; Educational Programs; *Higher Education; *Post Secondary Education; *School Responsibility; Skill Development; Speeches; Vocational Development

ABSTRACT

Symptoms of the need for substantial change in post secondary and higher education are evident. Enrollments are down, the dropout rate among first and second year students remain high, and there is the issue of over-qualification. Of even more concern than over-qualification is under-qualification, as evidenced by the 2.5 million young people who leave high schools and colleges each year without marketable skills to enter an economy that increasingly looks toward specific competencies. Young people should be able to leave formal schooling at any level with a solid, marketable skill. The concept of career education is offered as a means of acquainting children in the early grades with the many broad career fields open to them so that they may have the opportunity to explore career fields through their junior high school years and have a career goal by the time they reach high school. Should they elect post secondary education, they must make the eventual transition from high school with definite ideas concerning their careers. Post secondary institutions must increase their adaptability for providing continuity of career education programs for students initiated in high school. (SB)

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED 078124

VOICES FROM THE REAL WORLD*

By S. P. Marland, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for Education
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Recently I received a note phrased in genteel anguish. The writer, a professor of English in a small liberal arts college in Kentucky, was inquiring on behalf of his students as to where job opportunities might exist for persons with a background in English or, more precisely, what to do in the face of the apparent disappearance of such opportunities.

"Teaching positions in general, and in English in particular, are not as readily available as in previous times," he noted with masterful understatement. He added, "It becomes necessary to demonstrate to our students the wide variety of occupations open to them."

As one myself, I have to argue that there shall always be an English major, however sticky it might be at the moment in finding a berth for our superb talents. But let us move on to another, allied, but more forceful complaint.

Business Week magazine published in its October issue the pithy comments of a young, unemployed New Yorker whose newly minted degree in chemistry, it turns out, could, with a token, get him on the subway.

---

*Before the Annual Conference of the Council of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Sheraton-Carlton Hotel, Washington, D.C., Friday, November 10, 1972, 9:00 a.m.

UT 018 408

"I was told America needed scientists," he said, "and there was an implied promise of employment. Now America doesn't need scientists, and I can go to hell."

These are but two voices. I mention them because I believe such predicaments should be of paramount interest to all who place the enhancement of educational quality high on the national agenda. I bring them to you specifically because the problems they indicate are of obvious concern to you as deans of our most prestigious colleges of arts and sciences. Such complaints, and many others like them, reverberate ominously in the gap that exists between the academy and the "real world" --- that concept jokingly bandied about by students as they unsuspectingly go through their college paces, unaware perhaps of the extent of higher education's failure in this decade to bend its institutions to meet the pressures and demands of our postindustrial society.

That failure has become distressingly apparent to the English professor searching for jobs for his students. Unable to find them in traditional areas, he begins tentatively groping for new outlets for their talents, an exploration that lies at the heart of career education as I envision it. Our young chemist reacts with bitterness and feels that, somehow, the system has really failed him. He is enveloped in intense dissatisfaction with things as they are for him---and that is another prime motivator of the career education theme.

Both men raise legitimate questions as to the appropriateness of the educational system --- its curriculum, its

its counseling, its usefulness. "Pedants sneer at an education that is useful," Alfred North Whitehead observed. "But if an education is not useful," he asked, "what is it?" I will answer that question by stating the obvious: useless education is useless --- and a system of schooling that dispenses such a dubious line of products is of questionable value to the individual student or the society as a whole. Yet it should be understood that I am far from despairing of our system of education. I have lived within it for more than three decades as a professional educator, giving as much as I could to it during those years, and taking much from it both then and earlier when as a student the public schools of Connecticut began the laborious process of lifting me out of the innocent barbarism of the young.

In fact, I would say that, viewed broadly, the education system has been an unquestioned success in America, whatever Silberman or Illich may have to say. Yet who can deny the evidence of dry rot that infests our ship? We have seen too many hopeless dropouts and skill-less graduates and entirely futile non-activities masquerading under the guise of learning to think otherwise. Who can argue against the patent necessity for examining and rebuilding much of the basic structure after first rethinking its purpose? I propose that career education be the theme of that reform, a new direction that really amounts to a clear recognition of very ancient realities such as the need to inform an English professor of the many uses of English --- or a chemistry major of the variety of applica-

tions to w ich the tools and talents which he possesses may be put. Both seem afflicted with a certain lack of awareness of the marketplace. Surely, it should not be that difficult for the English professor to take note of the fact that there are a vast number of occupations tailor-made for persons with a solid grounding in English that have nothing whatsoever to do with teaching. At the heart of a rapidly expanding publishing industry, for example, are the writers and editors who really have but one basic product to offer --- their ability with language, writing, recognizing, and eliciting prose that communicates. There are the high-salaried denisons of Madison Avenue who, for better or worse, have wrought a small revolution in the English language. I am not certain that I recommend an advertising career but it remains a possibility. There are, of course, expanding numbers of communicators at the Federal, State, and local levels of government who bridge the gap between program development and actual use. Most of them first caught the cadence of rhythmic sentence structure as English majors. Careers for those schooled in English abound, and I think we have an obligation to point out alternatives to those thousands of young men and women who, even now, find themselves drifting toward the overloaded teaching profession.

As for the youthful chemist, I surely agree that anyone who has earned credentials in that difficult field deserves better than apparent rejection by society. Yet I am not sure that he has been rejected.

He is finding job hunting tough for the precise niche he was trained for, or thought he was trained for, but I suspect that he, too, is unaware of related alternatives worth looking into. Has he considered marketing chemical products? Has he thought of the growing environmental industries which are clearly in need of trained talent, or the emerging fabric industry based on new chemical processes, or perhaps borrowing a page from the English major's book and editing and writing for burgeoning scientific and technical publications? So while he may not be able, at this particular juncture, to become the type of scientist to which, perhaps idealistically, he aspired while at school, it just may be possible to find an alternative occupation with as much or more potential for utilizing his specialized background. We have a former chemist in the Office of Education you may know -- Joe Cosand, our Deputy Commissioner for Higher Education and an outstanding educational leader. In fact, who among us in this audience graduated from college with a clear occupational goal? We all know the answer to that one, and it suggests creating a climate of career awareness as a part of all learning.

We fail our young people when we do not at least alert them to the potentialities in the marketplace for the training they have acquired in the academy. Moreover, I believe that dispensing this awareness is a legitimate objective of liberal arts and science education, which traditionally have provided for intellectual and personal fulfillment as well as the ad hoc and nonsystematic development of occupational competence and awareness for many people. I am convinced that students are

considerably ahead of many professors and administrators in this regard. They do see academic and career preparation as complementary in their educational aspirations.

More than ten years ago, James Conant, a distinguished teacher and scholar, made the point in the book, Slums and Suburbs. He wrote:

"I must record an education heresy, or rather support a proposition that many will accept as self-evident, but that some professors of the liberal arts will denounce as dangerously heretical. I submit that in a heavily urbanized and industrialized free society the educational experiences of youth should fit his subsequent employment.

There should be a smooth transition from full-time schooling to a full-time job, whether that transition be after grade 10 or after graduation from high school, college, or university."

My basic theme, then, is really part and parcel of what your annual meeting is all about. Your institutions perhaps exercise the decisive role in fostering the intellectual curiosity, social and moral values, and personal priorities of the young men and women who will be our national leaders in the final quarter of this century. How well you do your job will quite simply determine how well they do theirs.

As our profession continues to search for answers to effecting desired institutional changes, I hope we can engage ourselves with demonstrated need rather than change that is more fashionable than substantive. I hope we find an adequate response to the two voices I quoted earlier, and to the many more as well who raise the general complaint of educational

inutility and irrelevance. In sum, we must determine how to bridge the widening gap between that which is taught to our youth and that which they must know in the difficult, pressure-filled years of adulthood when Wordsworth is a shimmering memory but the need to live a productive economic and social life a pressing reality. This is not a zero sum game. . . we win, you lose, suggesting that career education displaces the liberal arts. On the contrary it is proposed that career education will give strength and purpose to the liberal arts, and will provide more highly motivated learners in post-secondary education altogether.

The climate for fashioning and implementing change in higher education was certainly never more encouraging. First, because of the inescapable fact that client disaffection is forcing change upon us. Second, because the financial squeeze is exacting change from us. Third, and more positively, because change itself was never more feasible in the eyes of the participants. Many brilliant minds --- including those in this room --- are producing compelling alternative solutions to present practice that will force their way to trial.

All symptoms of the need for substantive change, particularly negative ones, are evident. Freshman enrollments are declining in many four-year institutions, in part as a result of rising tuition costs that have moved upward to meet spiraling faculty salaries and administrative costs. The dropout rate among first and second year students continues high, often not due to the student's inability to handle the work, but rather

due to his perception, justified or not, that the cost is not worth the candle. Graduate enrollments are also down for a variety of reasons, including the fact that young people, who are finding that the first degree is not the open sesame to a career, conclude that a second one may not be either. Certainly there is the issue of over-qualification. An employment director for a big utility company says, for example, "A graduate with BS or a BA is about right for us. Any more initials after his name and we tend to label the applicant 'overqualified'." And the Department of Labor estimates that 80 percent of all occupations for the remainder of this decade will require less than a four-year degree.

But what should be of even more concern to us than over-qualification is under-qualification --- education's dismal track record in allowing some 2.5 million young people without marketable skills to spill out each year from our high schools and colleges into an economy that increasingly looks toward specific competencies. These are the young people who drop out of high school, graduate from the high school general curriculum, or drop out of college without completing a degree program. Not included in our 2.5 million figure are many of the graduates of four-year institutions who find themselves in that "real world", unemployable.

We must acquaint children in the early grades with the many broad career fields open to them --- broad because many jobs within a single occupational cluster can change completely or even evaporate entirely in the brief time it takes a child to

become an adult. Guidance counselors should be involved early so that by the time youngsters enter junior high school they can concentrate on exploring three or four career fields appropriate to their interests and abilities. High school students, and I mean all of them, must have a career goal in mind, at least tentatively, and the necessary academic education and work experience to begin to advance on that goal systematically, both in their academic curriculum and their literal experiences.

Young people should be able, if they choose, to leave formal schooling at any level with a solid, marketable skill.

Should they elect postsecondary education --- four-year, two-year, technical institute, or whatever --- they must make the eventful transition from high school with definite ideas in mind concerning their careers, the ways in which they intend to use that expensive additional schooling. Clearly then, both two-year and four-year institutions must increase their adaptability for providing continuity of career education programs for students initiated in high school. In this respect, community and junior colleges deserve high marks for their efforts to establish formal arrangements with high schools that harmonize their offerings with the individualized programs of students who have opted for two-year technical and other degree programs. In this respect, they are ahead of four-year institutions.

Graduate schools likewise seem to be quite explicitly on the mark for career education, since presumably the students know why they are there, and what they want to learn, whether

law, architecture, medicine, or the scholarly content areas. Therefore the undergraduate years of postsecondary education seem to be especially germane to the proposition I am describing.

I recognize that there are many in higher education who do not care overmuch for career education reasoning, who believe passionately in keeping the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and beauty free and unconstrained. But I say that by responding to the impetus for career education, the liberal arts college will not make itself something less but rather something more. It will become an institution that not only cares about fostering scholarly aspirations and competence, but holds itself accountable for making the individual student capable of putting that knowledge to useful ends. And knowledge must be useful, as I noted earlier from Whitehead, or it is nothing.

The interest and enthusiasm that have already been generated since the Office launched the career education concept two years ago are extremely hopeful signs. A national dialogue has resulted, generated in part though a series of 16 major regional conferences sponsored by the Office of Education last winter and spring. There is a swelling support and a strong sense of urgency on the part industry, civic, ethnic groups, members of Congress, State and local officials, and much of the education community in making career education a part of the pattern in the fabric of education from the early grades to the post secondary and graduate years.

Within the Office of Education, we have moved to secure

the specific involvement of the postsecondary community in career education implementation. Last summer we invited deans of 75 major schools of education to explore ways to introduce career education into undergraduate teacher preparation, and to assess the ways their systems could begin to change. The deans called in turn on their professors of educational administration to develop similar training opportunities for school administrators, both pre-service and in-service. The deans in general endorse the need for career education in their teacher training programs. But they have pragmatic questions that have to do with who does what at the teacher-training level. In part, my purpose today is to help provide the framework on which the arguments for or against career education can be mounted in the postsecondary system. That is why I think it vital that you have as much information as possible on what we've done in regard to career education to date as well as what we have on our drawing board for the future. I've mentioned the dialogue that has been launched. The conferences and workshops are designed not only to obtain interest and support but to welcome debate and stimulate negative as well as positive reaction that is needed for the establishment of any successful enterprise calling for change. We have also begun researching career education models and selectively installing them in schools and trainning centers. The models are being further developed and refined by the new National Institute of Education which has assumed responsibility for much of educational research and development work at the Federal level. Each State, with support from OE, is developing model systems, kindergarten

through grade 12, in addition to the NIE's demonstrations. On the legislative front, several provisions of the Education Amendments of 1972 will authorize more planning and operational support for career-related programs at the Federal and State levels, and for postsecondary as well as elementary and secondary. First is the creation of a Deputy for Occupational and Adult Education in the Office of Education. The new deputyship will serve to highlight the national commitment to career preparation. In planning its establishment, we have decided that this deputyship shall coordinate all career-related programs --- including postsecondary education --- funded under a number of legislative authorities. The Education Amendments also establish State postsecondary education commissions to develop statewide plans for higher education which will have immediate impact in your institutions. I suppose it can be argued that the one thing higher education does not need is another planning commission. On the other hand, I feel that Congress was wise in recognizing, at least in regard to Federal funding, that the time has come for some reasonable degree of coordination in our wide-ranging and extremely diverse arrangements for postsecondary learning in this Nation.

Once a State Commission has developed a plan that meets the requirements of the law, every institution covered in the plan becomes eligible to submit proposals for funding community college and occupational education provisions of the legislation. Four-year colleges and universities are eligible under the community college and occupational sections of the statute.

I can assure you that I will use all the leverage of my office to obtain maximum funding of these provisions as well as others affecting higher education. There is a crack in the door. The legislation is on the books, and the potential for the eventual increase of support for higher education in general, and innovation in particular, is all there. In one significant case, the establishment of a special program for postsecondary innovation and reform, $10 million will be made available this fiscal year as a result of the President's signing the education supplemental appropriation bill. These funds may be used to support reform in higher education, including career education-type initiatives as well as other activities aimed at enabling higher education to serve its students better.

In closing, let me say how encouraged I have been by your meeting. The subjects on your agenda indicate your strong desire to affirm the desirability and utility of the liberal arts, and I cannot think of a worthier cause in education. I feel that together we can respond to the needs of students, listening to their voices, heeding their call for help, being, in sum, true teachers.

John Erskine, when on the Faculty at Columbia, offered this prescription:

"A teacher is one who shows his fellow men how to do something, who imparts an active skill, and who kindles the desire to acquire this skill and to use it. In all creatures there is a natural ambition to live, which necessarily includes an ambition to learn, but even a natural ambition will need

encouragement. . . . If the fledgling recoils from the unsolid air, the mother bird pushes it overboard. This is teaching, of no mean sort."

I would add to that: ladies and gentlemen, let us go and do likewise.

# # #